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Preparing for NMCI: A White Paper for Commanding Officers and Senior Division Heads

Purpose: The purpose of this white paper is to provide lessons learned from preparations for NMCI implementation based upon the experiences of SPAWAR.

Background: NMCI will be the sole source for voice, video, and data services for Navy commands that operate ashore. Each command has certain requirements to be completed prior to the arrival of the NMCI team. The first increment periods (Increment 1.0 and 1.5) are underway with major shore concentrations in Norfolk and San Diego being the first installers. Information Strike Force (ISF) team members headed by EDS will be assigned to each activity once an Increment is released. SPAWAR plays an important role as one of navy's primary partners in implementing the NMCI concept and has experience in what an NMCI Implementation means.

Discussion: Much has been written concerning what a command must do to prepare for an NMCI implementation. This paper will present lessons learned from SPAWAR Charleston and SPAWAR Jacksonville's preparations as well as lessons from commands where SPAWAR is assisting in the preparations for NMCI.

According to the NMCI web site (www.eds.com/nmci) NMCI transition is in three phases. But even before Phase 1: Planning Change begins, commands are expected to have completed certain action items. In general, these items fall into three categories: Paper, People, and Time.

Paper: The Preliminary Site Questionnaire and the Legacy Applications Survey are the most important documents for any proposed user of NMCI. These documents may take a considerable effort to complete, based on command size and the number of seats. The documents will require a desk-to-desk, wall-to-wall inventory, including new items still in their boxes, and contractor equipment. The best prepared commands document all workstations, servers, printers, routers, hubs, verify license information, list COTS and GOTS, provide wiring diagrams, both "as is" and "to be" including seat locations, and have up-to-date InfoSec system accreditation. Blueprints of facilities should be collected as the drawings provide a reference for "as is" wiring diagrams. Identifying equipment that will be surveyed after NMCI is operating will prevent losing time later. If any classified NMCI seats are expected, CMS handling and storage may become issues. If your command or activity is part of a larger command, have the senior command pass along any preparations they may have completed for you. For example, a PSD that does not control its network but will have NMCI seats, needs the information the PSA intends to provide to the ISF. In order to track all this information, several software tools are available. "Track It", "MVPCINFO", and MVPCBASE" software have been used with some success, or a homegrown MS ACCESS database can be created if the command or activity is very small.

One of NMCI's goals is standardization of the desktop. This means all seats will have the same basic software. EDS and its team accomplish this by using a "Gold Disk" for each computer hooked up to the new network. (To see the latest "Gold Disk" software, go to NMCI homepage and search the FAQ's with the key words Gold Disk). To meet this goal, a Legacy Applications Survey was developed. Every command or activity should fill out the Surveys in preparation for the ISF. Again, the EDS web site is the best place to start. By comparing the Gold Disk applications with what is presently on a desktop, a command or activity can initially see what applications they are currently using that may require certification by EDS. The next step is to check the current list of applications certified to see if the software has already been certified. A list of certifications is maintained at <https://saic-istars2.com/nmci>. Any applications currently on desktops that are neither on the Gold Disk nor on the certified list will require a Legacy Application Survey be sent to EDS for certification before the application can be used with NMCI.

Recommendation: Build and maintain a database to inventory and track the various elements of your IT infrastructure including software. If your command or activity is larger than most or your IT team is inexperienced, get help early in documenting your infrastructure.

People: The personnel in the command are critical to the successful start of the NMCI transition. Commands and activities must realize preparing for NMCI and transitioning to NMCI can be full time jobs, vice collateral jobs for their personnel. Besides preparing the command or activity for NMCI, more mundane responsibilities may include providing the NMCI ISF team with security passes. A list of POCs by department or by area such as Facilities, Network, Physical Security, Information Security, and Legacy Applications will assist the ISF as it processes the command. Before the NMCI ISF arrives, a Captain's Call for all hands to alert them about the NMCI contract and what activities the ISF will be performing brings focus to the effort.

Recommendation: Build a team similar to one used for Command Inspections. At most commands, NMCI preparations will be too much for one person.

Time: According to the NMCI web site, commands should have as much as 120 days to prepare and assemble the various documents. This is not always the case as funding release impacts advance preparation time. SPAWAR Charleston was given less than a month to prepare as Increment 1.5 was released in late Sep with an AOR of 31 Oct. A command or activity cannot count on having a full 120 days to prepare for the arrival of the ISF.

Recommendation: Get ready and stay prepared as if the NMCI changeover will be accelerated. SPAWAR can assist if you may need help.

Summation: Start with the NMCI web site (www.eds.com/nmci) and click on "Making The Transition". This site contains the latest guidance and explains the process of transition to NMCI. Prior to "Making The Transition", advance preparations are required like those for a command inspection. Assigning a team to coordinate the completion of the Preliminary Site Questionnaire and the Legacy Applications Survey as well as being responsible for physical security, facilities, etc is critical. The planned amount of preparation time and the actual time given may be considerably shorter. And most importantly, if you feel uncomfortable with your preparations, call and ask for help.

SPAWAR Jacksonville is an NMCI-experienced resource available to provide support from assessing a command's or an activity's current NMCI preparations, to leading a team completing the NMCI preparations. Contact Marketing at 904-542-6378, Code 32J at 904-542-6025, or Code 33J at 904-542-6114 for assistance.



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